



Subject:	Consultation and Call for Evidence on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment
Date:	12 th March 2024
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Matthews Operations Director, Resources and Fleet
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To provide the Committee with the proposed Belfast City Council responses to the recently published Consultation and Call for Evidence on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the proposed responses to the Consultation and Call for Evidence on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	At the Committee meeting held on 6 th February 2024, members were presented with the

	DEFRA Consultation and Call for Evidence (launched on 28 th December 2023) on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment.
3.2	Whilst producer responsibility and waste policy are devolved matters, there will be a continued UK wide approach to WEEE Extended Producer Responsibility (WEEE EPR). Accordingly, this consultation was undertaken jointly by all four administrations.
3.3	In Northern Ireland, the outcome of the consultation will inform decisions of the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.
3.4	The consultation document is attached as Appendix 1 and the Impact Assessment as Appendix 2.
3.5	The consultation presents reforms to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013, which are intended to drive up levels of separately collected WEEE for re-use and recycling.
3.6	The reforms aim to ensure that producers and distributors of electrical and electronic products finance the full net cost of collection and proper treatment of products that end up as waste. The proposed reforms are also intended to support the drive towards a more circular economy by ensuring products are designed to have a lower environmental impact than those which are currently consumed and also to ensure products stay in use for longer.
3.7	<p>The consultation document includes proposals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduce a UK-wide household waste collection system for both small and bulky items. This would be largely financed by the importers and manufacturers of such equipment. Householders would still be able to take unwanted electricals to their local household waste and recycling centre. - ensure that sellers have an obligation to take away an old appliance, at no additional charge and if requested to do so, where a replacement large appliance, such as a fridge, is delivered to a household. - strengthen the existing take-back obligations placed on large retailers to enable easy drop off with them of unwanted items. - place an obligation on online sellers. In these instances, producers would continue to finance the costs of proper treatment, recycling or preparation for re-use of items that are collected by retailers and online sellers. - place new obligations on Online Market Places. - ensure producers of vapes properly finance recycling costs when they become waste.
3.8	Within the consultation, the policy proposal of particular interest to Belfast City Council is: <i>Increasing collections of waste electrical and electronic equipment from households</i> , where producers of electronic and electrical products are to be responsible for financing kerbside collections of small household WEEE, with an obligation placed on producers to fund separate household waste collections, potentially delivered by integration with existing kerbside collection services provided by local authorities.

3.9	It is anticipated that the service might take the form of a regular collection round. Views on the frequency of such a round, in order to balance impact against efficiency, are sought as well as whether a service could be delivered via an “on demand” approach, a regular collection round or potentially a mix of approaches in different areas.
3.10	It is also envisaged that a producer-led Scheme Administrator would be necessary to carry out the functions required to rollout a UK-wide household collection service on behalf of producers and to be responsible for negotiating contracts with delivery partners such as local authorities and waste management companies and collecting necessary funding from producers or their PCSs and views on this are sought.
3.11	<p>Within this section, views are also sought on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how small WEEE should be defined, for example, by weight or dimension; - whether or not there are any products that could generate risks from being included in a household collection arrangement; - the options and costs for a kerbside service delivered by local authorities which are outlined in the Impact Assessment; and - a proposal that producers would have an obligation to finance the cost of bulky waste collection services for WEEE that is typically provided by local authorities, on request, (in some councils, this is provided as a chargeable service.) The obligation would be to provide a free of charge service to households on request, for WEEE too large to be collected via a future collection service for smaller items.
3.12	Within Belfast City Council's draft response to the consultation document, we are supportive of the proposals for producers to finance WEEE kerbside collections. However, from a council perspective, rolling out such a scheme (to incorporate small WEEE into kerbside collections) will require careful operational planning, implementation, and delivery.
3.13	We request that government give full consideration to the complete supply chain and propose how best to apply the Waste Hierarchy in order to promote WEEE repair and reuse as more favourable options over recycling. We support the proposal for a separate category for vapes, based on their properties and the potential safety issues associated with these items.
3.14	Alongside this consultation document, DEFRA has also published a call for evidence, setting out wider areas for reform in which detailed proposals and an accompanying impact assessment have yet to be developed. Additional evidence and views are sought, to assist further policy development ahead of consulting on formal UK-wide proposals supported by a full assessment of costs and benefits.
3.15	The “call for evidence” generally centres around the allocation and targets for the Producer Compliance Scheme and also seeks specific evidence which Belfast City Council does not hold. The main focus of our draft response is in relation to activities for which producers should finance including dealing with residual, fly tipped and littered WEEE waste. We request consideration to incentivising PCS to promote reuse over recycling which would affect schemes such as Belfast City Council’s IT ReUse and would likely have a better environmental outcome. We also note that potential changes to requirements around business-to-business WEEE recycling may have an effect on business WEEE that sometimes ends up at Council facilities (for example fly tipped commercial fridges being brought to our Waste Transfer Station.)
3.16	It is proposed that the reforms will be phased in, starting potentially as early as next year with measures being implemented on online marketplaces, free collection of large domestic

	<p>appliances by retailers on delivery of a new item and the introduction of a new EEE category for vapes.</p>
3.17	<p>The start of the rollout of the household collection system, is anticipated from 2026, along with the other measures set out in the consultation document. It is expected that policy proposals arising from the call for evidence will be phased in over a longer timeframe.</p>
3.18	<p>This package and the subsequent government response should be taken as a review and report of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013 as required under Regulation 93.</p>
3.19	<p>The closing date for responses to the Consultation and Call for Evidence is 7 March 2024. It is proposed to forward our draft comments to DEFRA by this date and to confirm Committee and Council approval or any required amendments retrospectively.</p>
3.20	<p>The full consultation and impact assessment are attached as Appendix 1 and 2. The Call for Evidence, is attached as Appendix 3</p>
3.21	<p>Belfast City Council's draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 4. Belfast City Council's draft response to the Call for Evidence is attached as Appendix 5</p>
3.23	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None in relation to responding to the consultations.</p>
3.24	<p><u>Equality or Rural Needs Implications</u></p> <p>None in relation to responding to the consultations.</p> <p><u>Abbreviations</u></p> <p>DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs EEE - Electrical and Electronic Equipment EPR - Extended Producer Responsibility PCS - Producer Compliance Scheme WEEE - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p> <p>Appendix 1 – Consultation on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment Appendix 2 – Impact Assessment on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment Appendix 3 - Call for Evidence on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment Appendix 4 – Belfast City Council's draft response to the Consultation on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment Appendix 5 - Belfast City Council's draft response to the Call for Evidence on reforming the producer responsibility system for waste electrical and electronic equipment</p>